

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### K and S Wire Products

#### Missouri Enterprise

### Manufacturing Process Improvement Program Enables K & S Wire Products To Meet Global Competition

#### Client Profile:

K & S Wire Products, Inc., founded in 1995, is located in Neosho, Missouri. The company manufactures a wide range of CNC wire forms, grills, grates, display units and custom products for customers in a variety of industries. K & S Wire has grown steadily, expanding its Neosho facility six times, adding new equipment and hiring over 80 employees since 1995. The most recent expansion was a 30,000 square foot addition to house the company's new division, Neosho Powder Paint Company. The company currently employs 90 people.

#### Situation:

Intense overseas competition began to take a toll on K & S Wire Products' sales and profits the last several years. In response to the intense foreign competition that it was facing, the company selected Missouri Enterprise, a NIST MEP network affiliate, to help create and nurture a "Lean Enterprise" culture of continuous improvement.

#### Solution:

Missouri Enterprise introduced employees to "Lean Enterprise" principles and focused on hands-on implementation assistance of industry "best practices" and state-of-the-art techniques to enhance productivity and compete successfully with low cost producer companies. In addition, the program included development of a number of current and future state Value Stream Maps, an extensive 5S project, implementation of improved plant layout/visual flow techniques and a series of Kaizen events to foster continuous improvement throughout the plant and the business office.

Management and employee commitment to continuous improvement yielded exceptional results for the company. In February, 2006, K & S Wire Products recorded another milestone in its "Lean" journey. The company sealed and sent a container of some 111,000 wire frames on its way to China where the parts would be used in building displays for marketing "flip-flops" in retail outlets across America. The company's newest division, Neosho Powder Painting Company, is also meeting foreign competition and recently won an order to paint 857,000 parts which was originally planned for overseas completion.

#### Results:

- \* Increased sales by \$1 million.
- \* Retained \$1,650,000 in sales.
- \* Saved \$183,000 in costs.
- \* Invested \$218,000 in equipment.
- \* Invested \$25,000 in workforce development.

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**Testimonial:**

"In response to our customer needs and the demands of the marketplace, we are always seeking ways to incorporate industry 'best practices' and new techniques and technologies into our operations. Working with Missouri Enterprise gives us access to state-of-the-art methods and the support we need to make these methods work for us. They are committed professionals who really care."

Gene Schwartz, Sr., President